

NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

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Reps. Markey, Turner and Holmes Norton Blast Administration on Rail Security

**"Halloween Doesn't Justify Playing Tricks With These Hazardous Materials,"
says Markey**

Washington, DC: Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior Member of the House Homeland Security Committee, along with Representative Jim Turner (D-TX), the ranking Democrat on the House Homeland Security Committee, and Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), a Member of the House Homeland Security Committee, today released a letter to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Tom Ridge regarding the Department's failure to even consider the re-routing of extremely hazardous material shipments around Washington, DC as it developed its security plan for the area. The security plan is expected to form the basis of a nationwide rail security policy.

"It may be Halloween," said Congressman Markey, "but that is no excuse for neglecting one of the most straightforward methods of removing the most catastrophic consequences of a terrorist attack on shipments of highly toxic materials. Even the railroad itself has evidently concluded these shipments are too dangerous to send through our nation's capitol."

Congressman Turner noted that: "Re-routing may not always be the right option to protect a city such as Washington, D.C., but we will never know because the Administration appears to have taken it off the table even though CSX has voluntarily rerouted dangerous cargoes for the last seven months. This is wrong. All options must be considered to protect our Nation's citizens."

Enough chlorine to kill or injure 100,000 people in half an hour is often contained in a single rail tanker car going right through crowded urban centers – including Washington DC. An Ohio-based Al Qaeda operative has already been arrested and pled guilty for plotting to collapse a bridge in New York City or derail a train in DC. According to TSA administrator Stone, the Department's rail vulnerability assessment and security plan for DC "will serve as the baseline for shaping national policies in the transport of hazardous materials for other high rail traffic areas". The outcome of the DC area plan can therefore be expected to have considerable impact nationwide, and DHS next plans to examine rail security in New Jersey and Cleveland.

Recent press reports have indicated that the vulnerability assessment and security plan for the DC rail corridor being conducted by DHS, which was originally expected to be completed by summer 2004, has once again been delayed. These reports, as well as numerous unclassified meetings and telephone conversations conducted by Rep. Markey and Turner's staff, indicate that while DHS has no plans to require the permanent re-routing of any shipments of extremely hazardous materials around Washington DC, CSX has been voluntarily re-routing such shipments for more than 7 months. When DHS personnel were questioned regarding its analysis of the economic and other considerations associated with re-routing, they were unable to provide a response and had no idea whether such an analysis had been conducted by anyone at the Department. This left the impression that rather than conducting a true

vulnerability assessment that considered all possible security solutions, the Department instead directed the staff to consider all options *except* re-routing as it developed its security plan.

Reps. Markey, Turner and Holmes Norton's letter requested that the Department provide a justification for its decision not to consider re-routing as an option, as well as copies of materials it used to make that decision. Rep. Markey is the author of H.R. 4824, a bill that requires DHS to promulgate regulations to upgrade the security of shipments of extremely hazardous materials, including the use of re-routing as one of numerous measures that must be taken.